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**Congress of the United States**  
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COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS (RANKING MEMBER)

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READINESS

FRANKING COMMISSION

June 22, 2017

The Honorable Ben Carson  
Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Carson:

On June 7, 2017, at my request, HUD staff joined me on a conference call to discuss ongoing problems at Essex Village, a Section 8 subsidized housing complex operated by P.K. Management in Henrico County, Virginia. As I have indicated in previous letters, residents of this complex are being forced to live in unsafe and unsanitary conditions. Like all Americans, these men, women, and children deserve access to quality housing. Since their current community fails to consistently meet that standard, I requested that your agency take several actions at the end of that call:

- provide a copy of P.K. Management's recent report on needed repairs at Essex Village, which I understand the company submitted to HUD in May;
- share the date of HUD's next REAC inspections at Essex Village, either immediately or as soon as those inspections are scheduled;
- develop a plan to close Essex Village and provide vouchers enabling residents to re-locate as soon as possible;
- make necessary changes to allow Henrico County inspectors to accompany any inspectors HUD sends to Essex Village in the future; and
- abate or terminate HUD's contracts with P.K. Management at all properties.

Recognizing that HUD might argue that some of these actions are not feasible, I also requested:

- a detailed explanation for why any given action cannot be taken; and
- constructive alternative suggestions for ensuring that current residents of Essex Village have access to homes that afford them a decent quality of life.

Finally, I expressed my hope that I would receive a response within two weeks.

More than two weeks have now passed; I have not received a substantive response, nor have I received any indication of when I can expect such a response. I recognize that two weeks is, in some sense, a short time-frame — but it is a very long time to spend in an unsafe, unsanitary home.

Residents of Essex Village live in a community where unaddressed structural issues make stairways and balconies unsafe; where mice, cockroaches, and other vermin are uncontrolled; and where health hazards like mold and sewer backups are a continual fact of life. All of these problems have been extensively documented in the news media, and I have repeatedly shared specific incidents with your agency in an effort to illustrate the urgency of residents' needs.

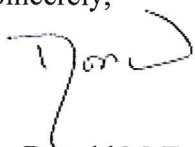
By way of further illustration: twice in the past month, the privately-owned sanitary sewer system that serves Essex Village has backed up — exposing residents to raw sewage, and imposing all of the health risks that attend such exposure. In one instance, residents did not call the County because they were told not to. Although the backup was reported, according to residents, no one came to the complex to address the problem until the day after it was reported. HUD was made aware of this by County staff. In the second instance, the County was notified and responded after P.K. Management maintenance staff could not be reached using any of their contact numbers. Henrico County took the necessary actions to ensure that staff were located, and they stayed on site to assist residents until the problems were adequately resolved. This has happened on multiple occasions, all of which have been documented by the County —and I have no confidence that underlying issues are being addressed.

I understand that Henrico County has offered to work with P.K. Management to study their current system and assume permanent responsibility for the community's sewer system if its current owner/operators agree to bring it up to the County's current standards. I am told that offer has never received a response, and the County has assumed it is being ignored. It seems clear that those owner/operators are unable or unwilling to mount the kind of vigorous effort that would make Essex Village a more livable community for my constituents.

I believe HUD's responsibility is clearer than ever. If the parties with whom HUD contracts fail to meet even the most basic standards of quality and safety, residents of those properties deserve immediate relief. I am seeking such relief for my constituents.

I therefore reiterate my earlier requests, as re-articulated in this letter, and also ask for a list of federally-funded subsidized housing complexes with failing REAC scores in Virginia's 4th Congressional District, and for the names of the owner/operators of those housing complexes. I ask for an explanation of why I have not yet received a response to these inquiries, and I ask that your staff communicate to me a date by which I can expect that response.

Sincerely,



A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress